

THE MORNING CALL

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'Buddy Holly' marks collaboration between Bucks and Kimmel

By Daniel Friedman

After a successful run in the summer of 2016, "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story" is returning to the Bucks County Playhouse on Saturday and will then transfer to the Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater in Philadelphia on June 24. The collaboration is the first between the two venues.

"The audience response to our production in 2016 was so overwhelming that we decided to break precedent and bring the production back this year," says producer Stephen Kocis. "Our collaboration with the Kimmel Center should give confidence to audience members that our commitment to high-quality productions and top-notch casts is unparalleled."

"This is an exciting project for the Kimmel Center as we continue to expand our role as producers in Philadelphia," says Anne Ewers, president of the Kimmel. "This five-star cast and record-breaking production will be a brilliant addition to summer on the Kimmel Center campus and we are thrilled to be partnering with our friends at Bucks County Playhouse."

From his meteoric rise to fame in 1957 through his tragic death less than two years later, Buddy Holly influenced modern music like no other performer of his generation. "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story" features more than 20 of Holly's greatest hits, including "That'll Be The Day," "Peggy Sue" and "Oh Boy." "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story" opened in London's West End, where it ran for over 10 years, and premiered on Broadway in 1990. It is considered one of the first of the now wildly popular "jukebox musicals."

Virtually the entire cast from the record-breaking run at Bucks County Playhouse is returning. Leading the cast of Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional talent is John Dewey, reprising his role as Buddy Holly.

Also returning: Zach Cossman as Jerry Allison, Andrew Frace as Hipockets Duncan, James David Larson as Joe B. Mauldin, Kent M. Lewis as Norman Petty, Brandi Massey as Apollo performer, Elizabeth Nestlerode as Vi Petty, Karack Osborn as The Big Bopper, Gilbert Sanchez as Ritchie Valens and Max Sangerman as Tommy Allsup. They will be joined by Natalie Ortega, as the sole newcomer to the cast as Buddy's wife, Maria Elena.

The production is helmed by Hunter Foster and choreographer Lorin Latarro of Bucks County Playhouse. Paul Masse is musical director, Adam Koch is scenic designer with lighting design by Gina Scherr. Nicole V. Moody is costume designer and Matthew Given is sound designer.